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PROFESSOR MACLEAN'S
LECTURE,
ON
A COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM
FOR NEW-JERSEY.



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A LECTURE

ON

A SCHOOL SYSTEM FOR NEW-JERSEY.

DELIVERED, JANUARY 23, 1828, IN THE CHAPEL OF

NASSAU-HALL,

BEFORE THE

Literary and Philosophical Society

OF

NEW-JERSEY.

—●—
BY JOHN MACLEAN, A. M.

*Member of said Society, and Professor of Mathematics in the College
of New-Jersey.*

—●—

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In accordance with the advice of several of his friends, the author, of the following lecture, determined to publish it soon after it was read to the N. J. Lit. and Phil. Society ;—but from a variety of circumstances, which it is unnecessary to detail, he has been obliged to defer its publication. While he rejoices, that the present earnest desire of the citizens of New-Jersey to have an efficient school system, and the ardour with which the State Legislature has entered upon the consideration of the subject, render the publication a matter of less moment, than it would have been twelve months ago ; still he entertains the hope, that it will not be entirely useless.

LECTURE,

&c.

MR. PRESIDENT,

and Gentlemen of the Society :

THE subject of the following lecture is "a School System for New-Jersey."

In the discussion of this topic, I shall take for granted the importance of a general diffusion of knowledge. To argue this point before an enlightened and liberal minded audience, must surely be unnecessary. It therefore only remains for me to show in what way the resources of the State may be so employed as to ~~be~~ secure to our citizens the blessings of a good education.

By a good education, we mean one adapted to the condition and necessities of man, and such an one as will qualify him for discharging the duties that arise from the various relations, which he sustains to society. As it respects most men, extensive knowledge is not essential for this purpose. The range of their duties is limited, and an amount of knowledge sufficient to make them acquainted with their responsibility to God, and with their obligations to love and serve him, sufficient to enable them to transact their ordinary business with convenience, and finally, to exercise with understanding their elective franchise, is all that is essential to the well being of the large majority of men. We would by no means, however, be understood to say, that extensive knowledge would be of no use to all, or that it is not desirable for

all, but merely that without such knowledge, the offices of civil society may be well regulated, and the blessing of liberty, peace and prosperity secured. But without a general diffusion of knowledge, we do believe that there is no permanent security for our property, our liberty, or even our lives; and the more extensive this diffusion the better, provided it be of the right kind and properly given. It must include both moral and intellectual improvement—to neglect either, and especially the first, renders education defective: and if, in the imparting of knowledge, the attention be confined to the latter, we must admit, that knowledge may become more injurious to society than ignorance; for the most powerful incentives to virtuous conduct being removed, as well as the strongest barriers against vice, and an additional ability to do evil, being acquired by intellectual culture, we have reason to fear that men would, under such circumstances, pervert their talents, and employ them for evil rather than good. For we see, that men possessed of well finished and highly cultivated minds, but regardless of all moral obligation, are the greatest curses to the communities of which they are members, and are vastly more injurious to civil society, than they would have been without such great learning and mental refinement.

It is true, that the inculcating of moral sentiments, does not always prevent a perversion of knowledge, yet the entire want of such instruction, is always attended with evil; and moral instruction is generally effectual in restraining the vicious propensities of man, and in prompting him to virtuous actions. Instruction, moreover, must not only be of the right kind, but it must be properly given. The precepts of religion and morality may be so delivered as to be productive of more mischief than good. If delivered by one whose own deportment is utterly inconsistent with the rules, which he gives to his pupils, it is plain, that they will seldom, if ever, exert a salutary influence on the minds of those who

receive them. If they are given in a manner evidently indicative of a want of interest in the truths inculcated, they must lose much of their natural force. If, on the contrary, the life of the teacher corresponds with his instructions, if the diligence and the earnestness with which he urges, upon the minds and consciences of his pupils, the obligations of virtue and religion, bear witness to his sincerity, we may look for the happiest result from such a course of instruction. We do not mean to assert that no man should be employed as a teacher of youth, who is not a pious man, though at the same time we do believe, that it is greatly to be desired that all persons concerned in teaching should be men that fear God, and who, in all their instructions, have reference to his glory; and we do firmly maintain, that no man ought to be employed as an instructor of youth, who is not a person of an excellent moral character; and we should consider that state to be grossly negligent of its duty, which would suffer a person of immoral habits to instruct in its public schools; and we would regard those parents greatly wanting in duty to their children, who would permit them to frequent a school under the control of an infidel or profligate.

We are fully aware, that it would be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, for those executive officers of government, who may be entrusted with the direction of the public schools, to regulate the nature and extent of the religious instruction, which should be communicated, but they may with ease, and ought by statute to be required to prevent the admission, into the public schools, of persons who do not sustain an unblemished moral reputation. The nature and extent of the religious and moral instruction, might, and we think, ought to be left to the discretion of the people, in the several districts. There should in no case, be the least interference with the rights of conscience, and no scholar should be required to attend to any lesson relating to morals or religion, to which his parents may be opposed. We mention

this case, for it might occur, that a person opposed to some of the tasks to be studied by the pupils of a school, would, nevertheless, prefer that his child should attend to them rather than that he should forego the advantages to be derived from the school in other respects.

Such being our views on this subject, and believing that they can stand the test of close examination, we shall, in the system of common schools, which we are about to recommend, have a reference to the particulars above enumerated.

And as we believe it to be highly important that something should be immediately done in this important business, we shall present for your consideration a plan which may at once be carried into operation ; and we shall then suggest such hints for the enlargement and improvement of the system, as in our opinion, will render it complete. We shall pursue this method, for the obvious reason, that in such matters, it is better to attempt that which is certainly feasible, rather than that which is desirable, yet of doubtful issue. And in estimating the practicability of any scheme, we must have reference not merely to the physical resources, but also to the views and feelings of those, upon whose co-operation, the success of our plan must in a great measure depend. However good a scheme may be, when abstractly considered, it may, in its practical operation, be far less efficient than another not so good in itself, but better adapted to our prejudices and to the state of society in general. It would be of immense advantage to our citizens, if we could have at once a complete and a well digested system carried into active operation, and it would be wise if the people would submit to a tax sufficient for the establishment and support of such a system as would secure to their children the rich blessings of a good education. But this is not to be expected—many do not feel its importance—many think it hard, that they should be taxed for the good of their poor neighbours, not knowing, or else not recollecting, that the improvement of the others

is a real benefit to themselves, and their families ; and the ignorant, not aware of the advantages of learning, are often opposed to the adoption of schemes, from which they, more than any others of their fellow-citizens, would derive advantage. And hence, also it is, that they are often unwilling to pay their share of taxes to defray the expense of supporting common schools, even when by the payment of a shilling they could obtain for their children what, without common schools, could not be obtained for a dollar. With such a state of feeling among our citizens, we must accommodate ourselves and our plans to existing circumstances, and make the most judicious application of the resources, which we have at command.

The school fund of the State amounts at present	
to about	\$200,000
The annual interest on this sum is about	\$12,000
Add one tenth of State tax	2,000
Additional appropriation from bank tax, &c.	1,000
	<hr/>
	\$15,000
	<hr/>

There are in the State one hundred and twenty townships, which, on an average, contain not more than seventy square miles, and of course, for children to attend school with any kind of convenience, they ought not to be required to go more than two or three miles ; and if the school-house be at a greater distance from their dwellings, it is evident that a large number of the children will be prevented from attending school. Allowing then one school, for fourteen square miles, there ought to be on an average five schools for each township, and of course five teachers in each one, to furnish tuition for the whole year. Total, for the whole State, 600 teachers : now to distribute the \$15,000 equally among the teachers, would be allowing only \$25 to each one, a remuneration altogether inadequate to the support of the instruc-

ters: at least eight times this sum will be wanted for the purpose. We are not to infer, however, from this calculation, that the annual income from our school fund is too small at present to effect any great good; but only, that this income to be sufficient for the full compensation of the teachers, must exceed \$100,000, the interest at six per cent, of a capital of \$1,666,000, or at five per cent, of \$2,000,000, sums, which it would require thirty or forty years to accumulate, and which, for our consolation we may add, would probably not give us a more efficient system than we can have without them. The income from our present fund cannot immediately effect all that is desirable, yet it may be made the foundation of a system, which will naturally and gradually be improved. Let the Legislature grant to the several townships \$25 for each school district, on condition, that the inhabitants raise, by tax, authorized to be collected at their town meetings, or by voluntary contributions, \$50 for every such district, which, on an average, will give to each township, for the purpose of common schools, \$375, which would enable them to keep a school in each district for four months and a half in the year, to which all might have access, free of expense. The townships ought also to have liberty to tax themselves to any amount necessary for the support of common schools throughout the year.

In the above estimates, we have only taken the average of the townships, founded on their territorial limits, thus making the most favourable supposition as it respects expense; supposing, that by superior modes of instruction, a larger collection of children may be taught with the same ease that a smaller one is, and at an expense not much greater. We have done so, for the purpose of showing what is the least number of schools that will answer for the attainment of our object, viz. the affording, throughout the year, to every child in the State, the advantages of a good school.

Again, estimating the population of the State at 800,000, the average number for each township will be 2,500: allowing *one fourth* of this number, for the children between the years of five and fifteen, or for those children who might attend the schools, there would be 625 for each township. Now upon the usual method of conducting our schools, there ought to be, on an average, for each township, at least twelve teachers, that is, one for every fifty-two scholars; and even, if it were practicable to introduce into our schools the monitorial system, still from the dispersed state of our population, there would be need of five teachers in each township to furnish tuition for the whole year.

Upon the most favourable supposition then, there must be 600 teachers, to afford constant instruction to our youth. The expense of supporting these, \$120,000. The annual appropriation by the State Legislature is estimated at \$15,000, or one eighth of the whole sum. It is evident then, that the Legislative aid can only be regarded as an inducement to self-taxation by the people, in their corporate capacities as townships, and it can need but little argument to show, that to render this stimulus subservient to the end for which it is designed, it must be proportionate to the necessities of the several districts. The rich and populous townships will scarcely need any thing more than the bare authority to tax themselves. They do, and will have schools, whether they receive State patronage or not. And to them it is merely a choice with respect to the means of raising money for the support of their schools; yet a small annuity granted to them, on the condition of their supporting the schools by taxation, would probably determine them as to their choice, and lead to the more speedy adoption of a uniform system. The contrary is the fact, with respect to the townships of sparse population and of comparatively small resources: all the aid, which the Legislature can afford them, will not be more than sufficient, to induce such towns to

raise the sums, requisite for the support of the contemplated schools; and simply on this account, that it will, in general, be more difficult for the last mentioned townships to raise the necessary funds, whether you have respect to their wealth, or to their habits.

For the support of this opinion, we need only take a slight view of the number and condition of the schools in our State. Are not schools the most numerous and best supported, where the population is most dense? Will any pretend, that Essex is no better supplied with the means of instruction, than Monmouth, or Burlington, or Gloucester? Would it not, to say the least, be highly probable without any examination, that the less dense the population, the more difficult it would be for the inhabitants to supply their children with the means of education? Then, in order to afford to our youth, the rudiments of a good education, we must proportion our aid to their necessities; which is but saying, in other words, we must apportion our aid to the several counties and townships in the ratio of their territory. This method of distribution will probably be regarded at first sight, as by no means equitable, or as altogether improper; and many may think that the ratio of population, or of taxes, should be preferred to the one proposed. But, in forming our opinions upon this subject, we ought to bear in mind the nature of the object, which we wish to effect, and the course we are wont to pursue in analogous cases.

What then, should be the object of our State in raising a fund for the purposes of education? Should it not be, to give to each of our citizens such instruction as will enable each one to discharge the duties devolving upon him, as a citizen of a free State, and as a rational and accountable being? Is it not, evidently, the interest of the whole community, that every individual should be capable of discharging his proper offices? If the inhabitants of Monmouth, or Burlington, have greater influence in controlling the

affairs of the State, than those of the county in which I reside, is it not evidently my interest, that the inhabitants of those counties should be as well educated, and on all matters of legislation, as well informed, as the inhabitants of my own county, or even more so. It is evidently the part of wisdom, to relinquish a smaller good for the purpose of obtaining a greater; and we should almost regard it as a waste of time, to undertake formally to prove, that it is for the interest of those counties, in which schools are comparatively well supported, to relinquish what, in one point of view, might be regarded as their just share of the State property, for the purpose of securing good elementary schools to such counties, as could not, or would not, without a larger and disproportionate share of the public funds, support them in a proper manner. There would be a solid objection to our views, if we proposed to bestow unequal privileges, or greater benefits on some of our citizens than on others, even if the more highly favoured, should not only be the poorest, but also the most meritorious of our fellow-citizens.

But this is not our object; far otherwise. It is to put all on more of an equality, and on an equality with respect to a point, which it is of unspeakable importance that a nearer approach to equality should exist. And in gaining this point, our concern should not be so much to equalise the expense, as to completely to effect our purpose; and if this purpose can be the most fully attained by pursuing a particular course, it ought not be made an objection to it, that a greater expense will be incurred in some cases than in others, or that it will cost the State two or three times as much to educate her citizens in one section, as it will cost in another. In other matters of legislation, the apportioning of the expenditures to the population or to the taxes of the several sections is not regarded as the paramount object. It is the general good of the whole, and not of the majority of a community, which should, as far as possible, be the aim of a

State Legislature ; each member of such body should recollect, that he is not a member merely for the particular county which he may represent, but for the whole State ; and that he does, all circumstances considered, best consult the interest of his own constituents ; when in his measures, he seeks to promote the good of the whole body politic ;—and we venture to assert, that the members of our Legislature cannot more effectually promote the interests of the State, than by adopting such measures, as will, in the shortest possible time, afford to all our youth the means of obtaining a good education :—an education, which will make them virtuous, intelligent, and industrious citizens. Knowledge sufficient for this purpose, ought to be made as common as the air we breathe ; and if it were necessary for the attainment of this object, to directly tax some portions of the State, to support elementary schools in other parts, we should not hesitate to recommend and earnestly press such a measure. But fortunately this is not the case. Schools in sufficient numbers can be established and supported without resorting to it. Let the funds already at the command of our State be so distributed as to give aid, apportioned to the necessities of the townships, on the conditions before specified ; and in case any townships refuse or neglect to raise their quotas for the purposes of education, let the amount they would have received be distributed among the others ; and it will not be long before they all take those steps, which may be necessary to secure their full shares of the public funds.

We are free to confess, that we should not regard the proposed plan of distribution, as the best, if the annual appropriation could be increased to three or four times the sum proposed ; for in this case our object could be attained, if the distribution should be made according to the population of the several counties and townships ; or according to the taxes paid by them. Whenever the fund to be distributed is larger than necessary, for the mere purpose of a stimulus to

self-taxation, then, by apportioning it in the ratio of the taxes, the persons who have contributed most to the creation of the fund, will derive the greatest benefit from it, either by inducing them to extend the course of instruction in the elementary schools, or else in a less important respect, by requiring a less amount of taxes to be raised by them—and similar advantages will result to the more dense population, if we make the density of population our guide in this matter. Since, however, the funds at command are small in amount, and it is desirable that every one should enjoy, to a certain degree, the means of instruction; and since no part of our State would be worse of them than it is at present, even if it should continue to receive no legislative aid, we think that it should be regarded by no one as a hardship, that the most destitute should receive the greatest assistance; and it should also be recollected, that on our plan, if you give one county or township twice or thrice as much as another, you also require it in order to obtain the money, to raise within its bounds, two or three times the amount raised by the other; and if so, it is clear, that the inducement to self-taxation should be made proportionably strong.

There might possibly be cases, in which the proposed plan of distribution would operate with inconvenience; these, however, might be made matters of special legislation. It would indeed be singular, if a plan could be devised for the object contemplated, which should be liable to no exceptions. On our plan, Essex would receive as little aid from the State, as any other county, and if Essex were not interested in the welfare of the other counties, she might be regarded as the greatest sufferer; for if population were made the basis of our calculations, Essex would receive the largest share of the fund; yet if we entertain not an erroneous opinion of her inhabitants, they would be among the last to complain of the proposed rate of distribution; they are already enjoying, without State patronage, greater facilities for intel-

lectual and moral instruction, than some other counties would have, if they received all the avails of the school fund. If the distribution should be made according to the plan suggested, the counties, which would be most benefitted, are Monmouth, Burlington, Gloucester, Cumberland, and Cape-May; those, which would receive the least aid from the State, are Essex, Somerset, and Middlesex: and if we are not mistaken, they need the least. To the rest of the counties, it is almost immaterial, whether the annual avails of the school fund be divided among them, with a reference to their taxes, their population, or their territory:—and to none of them, can it make much difference, whether their respective shares be in proportion to their taxes or their population:—for the taxes of the several counties are nearly in proportion to the number of their inhabitants.

If \$15,000 should be disbursed from the State treasury, on condition, that twice this sum should be raised by the people; and if each teacher should be allowed for his services, \$200 per annum; there could be supported throughout the year, (whatever be the rate of distribution,) 225 schools, even on the supposition that nothing more should be done for their support, than what might be necessary to secure the patronage of the Legislature.*

If in the distribution, regard be had to the territory, the same provision would supply each school district, on an average, with more than four months tuition; for the funds necessary for the support of 225 schools for the space of a year, would be sufficient to support three times that number, or 675 schools for four months or one third of a year. With this number, or even with one rather smaller, every school district (if consisting of not more than fourteen square miles) might be supplied with the means of instruction for four months in each year—a time sufficient, if proper diligence on the part

* See Appendix, No. I.

of the teacher and of the scholars be used, to enable most children between the years of five and fifteen, to learn to read, even if ignorant of the letters of the alphabet, when they enter school ; if able to read, or even to spell correctly, when they enter, most of them might be taught to write ; so that in the course of a few years, all the children, by a proper improvement of their time and opportunities, would be taught to read and write correctly ; to understand the more important operations of arithmetic, and such other elementary instruction as the teachers might be capable of imparting. On this supposition, it would, in some cases, be necessary for the teacher to change his residence and school, two or three times each year ; and with care on the part of the proper authorities, this matter might easily be regulated, and a teacher be engaged for a year to give instruction to all the children in any three contiguous districts, who might frequent his school. And we doubt not, that this method must be employed, in many sections of our State, partly from want of funds, and partly from a want of teachers. And though the arrangement is not so good, as we could desire, yet it is one, that is feasible, and one that would be productive of much good.

Thus far we have been speaking of the almost certain results of the distribution of the avails of the school fund, in the way, and on the conditions before mentioned ; but it should be recollected, that, in the most populous parts of the State, there are already many and flourishing schools, continued throughout the year : none of these would become paralyzed by the small aid that they might severally receive from the State, and they would continue to impart the blessings of education to their youthful attendants. And if the several townships should be authorized to raise, not only double the amount received by them, from the State ; but any sum, requisite for the support of their schools, we might expect to see new vigour imparted to such of our schools as

are deserving patronage, and a uniform system of common schools adopted. Wherever there are good buildings erected, and suitable persons in them, already engaged in the business of teaching, it would probably not be expedient to make any other change than in the mode of payment, which should depend not on the teacher's agreement with the parents of the scholars ; for the payment should be made from the public funds. This method will ensure punctuality in the payment: the consequence of which will be, that men will engage to teach upon more moderate terms, than they would do, if there should exist a risk of their losing any part of the promised remuneration. And while on this subject, let us suggest the expediency of each scholar being required to pay the sum of \$0.25 per quarter, except in very special cases to be judged of by the persons entrusted with the direction of the schools and with the appropriation of the funds in the several districts. This sum, without being felt by the parents, would make the payment of the several teachers, in some measure, proportionate to their services, and their fitness to conduct the schools. Thus, a person who should conduct, on the monitorial system, a school consisting of 200 or 300 pupils, would receive from \$200 to \$300, in addition to the average allowance ; which we think ought not to be less than \$200 per annum, and which we are persuaded cannot for some years be less in this State, if we procure for our schools suitable teachers. We have seen it somewhere stated, that the average expense of supporting a common teacher in Connecticut, is about \$160 per annum, but it must be obvious to every one conversant with the subject, that for several reasons the expense would, for the present, be less in Connecticut, than it can be in our State. Our young men in general are not as capable of taking charge of common schools, as those of New-England ; and we must at first, if we have any thing of a general system introduced, look to some of our sister States for a supply in

part of our teachers, and, of course, we must offer them better terms than they procure at home, if we would obtain the services of such as are worth having. The services of some meritorious and well qualified young men, might be procured, in places, where the population is sparse, (and where, of course, the labours of the teacher will be the least,) for 150, or \$160; but in other places, a much larger sum would be requisite, say \$250, together with one dollar per annum, to be paid by each scholar, making exclusive of the last mentioned source of emolument, an average of about \$200 annual salary for each instructor. With such pay we might procure the services, not only of young men, but also of men of greater age and of much experience in teaching.

Having pointed out the resources for the support of schools, the method of distribution, and the emoluments proper to be allowed to the teachers, we shall merely say in addition, on this part of our subject, that we are not so tenacious of our views, as to think it better, that there should be no distribution, rather than it should not be made in the manner recommended. For the reasons already assigned, we think, that in present circumstances, it is best, that in the disbursement of the public funds, respect should be had to the territory, rather than to the population of the several counties and townships, or to the taxes paid by them. Still, we are decidedly of the opinion, that the avails of the school fund had better be divided according to any of the rates suggested, rather than they should any longer remain unapplied to the purposes for which they were intended. As to several of the counties it is a matter of little moment, which of the three rates be assumed, and it is unspeakably better for them all, that some one of them be adopted, and that the proceeds of the school fund be at once distributed. We may not have so uniform, efficient, and complete a system on one plan as on another, yet the benefits accruing from a cautious distribution of

the funds at command, are of so great importance to the present generation, that no inducement should be regarded as sufficiently strong, for a delay of this matter, until the avails of the school fund should be adequate to the entire support of our common schools ; or in other words, until 30 or 40,000 more of our youth shall have grown up in such ignorance, that they should be even incapable of reading ; for this will, in all probability, be the case, if nothing be done in this business, until we obtain a capital of 1,500,000 or \$2,000,000. Let a beginning be made—let the State give at once whatever aid it can, and if we may judge from the results of similar steps in other States, we may augur well for the result of our efforts. New-York, with a population of probably more than 1,200,000, commenced her efforts to establish common schools, with an annual appropriation of \$50,000 ; and with an appropriation not exceeding twice that sum, she now affords to more than 400,000 youth the means of instruction ; and cannot New-Jersey, with but one-fourth of the population, and with nearly one-third of the pecuniary means employed by New-York, in 1814, commence the important undertaking of establishing common schools ? and to speak comparatively, possessing larger means, may not New-Jersey expect, in the course of fifteen years, to have her 75,000 youth supplied with instruction ?

The advantage of an immediate commencement of this business, and the gradual introduction of a complete system, over the plan of waiting till the avails of the school fund be sufficient to defray all the necessary expenses, is simply this, that while the fund would be accumulating and useless ; a complete system might be brought into operation, and the present generation might reap the benefit of it. At present, the people of this State are contributing to the accumulation of a fund, from which, if it is not distributed for twenty or thirty years, neither they nor their children are to derive any benefit, and which, if applied to the support of common

schools, will not give the next generation better schools than they might have without any such fund. For proof of which, advert to the condition of the schools in Connecticut. Can any one show in what respect her schools have been improved by the possession of a large fund, amounting to \$1,700,000? or in what respect they are better than those of Massachusetts? Let the good work, then, be at once begun. And, at the very least, let such townships as may be disposed so to do, be authorized to raise any sum necessary for the support of common schools, and if it be thought expedient to set any limit to the amount to be raised, let that limit be, a sum equal to the whole amount raised by tax, in the town, for all other purposes. The townships should also be authorized to raise money for the erection of suitable buildings, for the accommodation of the schools.†—It will require no lengthened argument to prove, that great diligence, fidelity, and judgment, will be required of those, who may be entrusted with the management of the funds, and with the direction of the schools, in order that they may answer the desired purpose.

We shall now, in as few words as possible, mention our views on this point. We would recommend the appointment of a Board of Education for the State, who shall have control of this whole matter, subject to such general regulations, as the Legislature in their wisdom may see fit to prescribe; and who shall be required to present annually, to the Legislature, a statement of their proceedings, and of the number and condition of the schools, and a part of whose duty it shall be, to recommend to the Legislature, such alterations and additions in the system, as, in their opinion, will have any tendency to improve it. Among other things, that this Board be authorized to appoint, with a suitable salary, a superin-

* See some very valuable remarks on the Connecticut school fund, in the North American Review, for 1823.

† See Appendix, No. 2.

tendent of schools, whose business it shall be, as far as practicable, to visit the different schools; to receive all the reports from the teachers or the trustees of the schools in the several districts; to give all orders on the State treasurer, for the payment of moneys to the treasurers of the several townships—no order, however, to be given to any township treasurer, until he has deposited with the superintendent a certificate, that twice the amount of the appropriation allowed by law has been paid to him for the current year by the collector of taxes, for the purposes of education: and it should also be the duty of the Superintendent to attend to such other matters, as the Board of Education may direct.

The Board of Education should be empowered to appoint examining committees for the several counties, whose duty it should be made to examine all persons desirous to become teachers in such of the common schools, as may be aided by the State; in order, that individuals of licentious habits or sentiments, or persons unqualified for the business of teaching from want of adequate knowledge, may be excluded from the schools. And it should be a law of the State, that no individual should be permitted to take charge of any of the public schools, without obtaining the consent and approbation of the examining committee for the county in which the school may be located. The several examining committees should be expected to report to the Board of Education, through the Superintendent, the names of the persons licensed by them to teach, any defects existing in the course of instruction in the schools subject to their inspection, and whatever else may, in their opinion, require the interference of the Board or of the Legislature.—These committees should have nothing to do with the selection of the teachers for the several schools, or with the amount of the compensation, which the teachers shall receive for their services. These matters should be regulated by trustees of the several school districts, chosen by the people residing in the districts. The trus-

tees, or one of them, by order of the rest, should draw upon the treasurer of the township, in favour of the teacher, to any amount not exceeding the whole quota for that district. They of course, will be at liberty, if the allowance be not sufficient to support the school for the year, to make whatever agreement for the continuance of the school, they can, without involving the township in debt.

The trustees for the several school districts should also direct what degree of religious and moral instruction should be given in the different schools, and we think that it would be a good rule, that each teacher should be required to open his school, with reading some chapter in the Holy Scriptures in a reverent manner. According to these suggestions, the State, through its Board of Education and its several committees, exercising a general superintendence of the schools, and the people themselves, through their immediate agents, choosing their own teachers, fixing their salaries, and exercising perfect control over the religious instruction, would combine their efforts for the establishment and support of a system, dependent for its complete success on both, alike beneficial to both, and securing the integrity of the State by improvement of the morals, and by increasing the knowledge of the people; at the same time leaving the rights of conscience unimpaired.

We have now, gentlemen, presented to your consideration the outlines of a system for common schools, which we believe to be best adapted to the immediate necessities and resources of our State. And if the intelligence of the people shall call for, and our resources admit of it, we may very easily extend and improve the system; 1st, by making provision for the education of teachers; 2, by publicly rewarding one or more of the teachers in each county, who shall discover the greatest fidelity, skill, and success in conducting their schools; 3, by establishing schools of a higher order, to which all may have access on the lowest terms pos-

sible ; 4, by furnishing such youth, as shall very greatly distinguish themselves by their talents, diligence, and success in study, with the means of prosecuting their studies : and this as a reward of their merit.

The importance of these improvements will probably strike every mind upon the bare mention of them. I shall not, therefore, trespass upon your patience, at this time, by making any comments upon them ; the only objection to which, can be, the difficulty of procuring the requisite funds. That these funds, will, in the course of a few years be cheerfully furnished by the people, if the proper system of common schools be promptly introduced, we entertain little or no doubt. And we entertain as little, that if all the moneys now expended by our citizens, for the education of their children, were systematically and judiciously appropriated, they would be as well, if not better educated than they now are, and a large surplus left for the benefit of others ; we should therefore hope, that those who are able, and who actually educate their own children, even at great expense, will be not only among the last to complain, but among the most forward to support any judicious measures, adopted by our Legislature, for the establishment of common and classical schools, even if a considerable tax should be required for the purpose. An annual tax averaging ten cents for every inhabitant, young and old, would give \$30,000 a year, a sum sufficient to support a Principal and Assistant of an institution to educate young men for the business of teaching,* sufficient to loan to 70 pupils in said institution \$50 each, on such conditions, as may be prescribed by the Legislature, to allow \$1000 to be distributed as rewards to the best teachers, to give to each of our 14 counties, on an average, \$1000, for the support of one, or more classical schools ; and leaving \$10,000 to be expended in educating the most merito-

* See Appendix, No. 3.

rious and promising of our youth, say from 50 to 100 of them. We suggest these things, not because we believe that our State is now prepared to adopt these suggestions, but because we believe, that without any very sensible increase of our taxes, they could be carried into effect; and because we hope the time is not far distant, when the requisite means will be furnished for the purpose. While on this subject, we may perhaps be permitted to say, that without the least increase of our burdens, and with merely a radical alteration in our Militia System, we may have both a more effective militia and a very large sum for the purposes of education. It is, we believe, almost universally admitted, that our militia musters are worse than useless, that without answering any good purpose; they are, in general, merely occasions for dissipation, and of course tend to injure the public morals. The number of the militia is estimated at 43,500. Every individual who does not appear in the ranks three times in each year, is fined one dollar for every absence, unless he render a satisfactory excuse, or he be exempted by law from the performance of military duty: and I have been informed by one of our best militia officers, that those who attend the musters, expend a larger sum. If so, we may safely estimate the whole amount annually spent, at \$130,000 per annum. Now, if our State would adopt, at least in its leading features, the plan recommended by the Board of Officers, convened at Washington, Nov. 1826, to devise a scheme for the better organization of the militia; of which Board, General Scott of U. S. Army, was President; we might have, for a much less expense than we now incur, a far more effective militia; and in some measure, prevent the evils attendant on the musters, as they are at present conducted. Let the militia be reduced to about one-fourth of the present number, and then let them be divided in three divisions, &c.; let the officers of the several divisions be required to encamp by themselves for ten days in each year, for the purpose of

being drilled in the duties of the camp, and let them be paid for their time and expense, according to the rate suggested by the Board of Officers ; the whole expense would not exceed \$10,000.* Now if every person exempted from service by the reduction in the numbers of the militia, should be required to pay \$1.50 a year ; the State would receive from this source above \$48,000, of which sum, more than \$35,000 might be applied to the improvement of the morals of our citizens, rather than to their destruction.

If, however, the public mind is not prepared for such a measure, this at least, we think ought to be done : let every person have the option of serving or of paying to the collector of his township, a certain sum, per annum, say \$3.00, to aid in the support of schools, and let the money so collected, be faithfully appropriated to the object for which it was paid. To prevent any one's mistaking our sentiments on this subject, we take this occasion to say, that we have made these suggestions, not because we unconditionally and cordially approve of the Militia System just mentioned ; but we have done so, merely because it will be less pernicious in its effects, than the present one ; and because we consider it entirely useless to recommend its total abolition : of which, in times of peace, we should cordially approve. The best defences of a people, are sound morals and intellectual culture : let a people know and properly estimate their rights, and they cannot be enslaved : let the implements necessary for war be provided, and if there be occasion to use them in a righteous cause, an intelligent people will soon become acquainted with their use. We must acknowledge ourselves directly at variance with a sentiment emanating from a distinguished source, that it would be well to substitute military discipline and exercises in our schools, as a substitute for our Militia System, and

* See Documents, from the War Department, accompanying the President's message to Congress, in 1826.

as a remedy for its evils. The spirit fostered by such a system, is in a great degree hostile to the pursuits of peace, and the principles of true religion. And at no period of life, would military parades be so likely to make a powerful and unhappy impression upon youthful minds, as at that age, when boys usually frequent our schools. It is time enough to learn the art of war, when there is necessity for so doing; we are not of those, who believe, that our being perfectly equipped and prepared for war, will have a tendency, to preserve us in peace. Only let such preparation exist, and a fondness for military exercises become generally prevalent, and it will not be long before we find a pretext for going to war with some nation or other. The passions of men are too strong to resist the temptation, when the least opportunity is afforded, of exhibiting their military prowess. We wish it to be distinctly recollected, that this alteration of the Militia System is not at all necessary to the adoption of the system of common schools just recommended, or even for the support of schools of a higher order: but merely, that it is one means by which improvements may be grafted upon this system, without being at all essential to the existence of the system, or to its complete success.* And we wish it also recollected, that we are not so much concerned about the means, by which a good system of common schools may be introduced, as we are about the thing itself. This subject we firmly believe, is entitled to, and will soon command the serious consideration of every citizen of New-Jersey, possessed of intelligence and liberal feelings: until

* For the suggestion with respect to the expediency of a change in our Militia system, the writer believes himself to be indebted to the Hon. C. F. Mercer's discourse on popular education, delivered at Princeton, in September, 1826. And having referred to this production, he must take the liberty to add; that he knows of no work, which contains so much valuable information, in regard to elementary education; or so many important hints for the improvement of common schools.

it does, our citizens generally cannot be raised to that station and respectability, which every freeman ought to possess; nor can the physical resources of our State be fully developed. Those resources are great, and need only the union of intelligence with industry to make them greatly conducive to the prosperity of the State. As these, however, have already been presented to your notice in a very lucid and able manner, by one of our distinguished Vice-Presidents, the Hon. Mr. Dickerson, I shall not at present, say any thing more in regard to them;—and I shall now conclude my remarks, with observing, that our interest, reputation, and duty demand, that vigorous and immediate efforts should be made, to establish and maintain a good and extensive system of common and higher schools.*

* See Appendix, No. 4.

APPENDIX.

If \$15,000 should be distributed, upon the conditions mentioned on page 14; the following table exhibits the number of schools, which could be supported in each county, for one year; whether taxes, population, or territory, be the rule of distribution.

		Taxes.		Population.		Territory.
Sussex,	-	12	-	13	-	16
Warren,	-	12	-	13	-	10
Morris,	-	18	-	17	-	14
Essex,	-	21	-	26	-	8
Bergen,	-	15	-	15	-	14
Hunterdon,	-	26	-	23	-	15
Somerset,	-	15	-	13	-	9
Middlesex,	-	18	-	17	-	11
Monmouth,	-	21	-	20	-	34
Burlington,	-	24	-	23	-	27
Gloucester,	-	18	-	20	-	33
Salem,	-	12	-	11	-	10
Cumberland,	-	9	-	10	-	15
Cape-May,	-	4	-	4	-	9
		<u>225</u>		<u>225</u>		<u>225</u>

The calculations in the first column, were founded upon the taxes for 1824; those in the second upon the population in 1820; and those in the third, upon the territory as given by Gordon's Map of New-Jersey. No material error can arise from assuming the taxes of 1824, for the basis of our calculations; for though the taxes have been increased of late, there has been but little or no difference in the proportions paid by the several counties.

Having no returns of the population of our State, later than those furnished by the last U. S. census, we have made the estimates in the second column, on the supposition; that the increase of the population in the different counties has been uniform since the year 1820.

In making the above estimates, with respect to territory, we had recourse to Mr. Gordon's map: as it is doubtless the most correct and valuable map of the State ever published: If the scale on this map be perfectly accurate; and if we have made no mistakes in our measurements and calculations; the area of New-Jersey, is about 7500 square miles. Mr. Darby, in his view of the United States makes the area to be 7870 square miles. In a statistical table published a few years ago by Mr. A. Finley of Philadelphia, in connexion with a map of New-Jersey, the area is stated to be

only 6900. In the first American edition of Guthrie's Geography, and in the different editions of Morse's Gazetteer, New-Jersey is said to contain 8320 square miles.

Taking the largest number as correct; and dividing the State into 600 school districts, their average content will not exceed fourteen square miles. For several years, prior to the year 1824, the State was divided into 13 counties and 120 townships: since then, the county of Sussex has been divided, and now forms the counties of Sussex and Warren: additional townships also have been formed by the division of others; so that the present number of townships is about 125. The writer was not aware of this increase, at the time he was engaged in preparing the lecture. It is, however, a matter of no moment, as it respects the rule recommended for distributing the avails of the school fund; since the area of all the townships, taken collectively, is the same; whatever may be their number.

In the southern counties, there are bays and marshes, extending over a surface of five or six hundred square miles, which, of course, are uninhabited. If these should be deducted from the areas of the several counties, to which they belong; there would be one additional school for each of the counties of Warren, Essex, Morris, Bergen, Somerset, Middlesex, two for Sussex, and two for Hunterdon, while there would be one school less for Gloucester, one for Cumberland, one or two for Salem, two for Monmouth, and four for Cape May. If the State Legislature should ever deem it expedient to make territory the rule of distribution; each township could be required to have an accurate survey of its own township made, and forwarded to the Trustees of the School fund.

The following table, shews the taxes paid by each county in 1824, the population, in 1820; and the area of each:

Counties.	Taxes.	Population.	Sqr. Miles.
Sussex, - -	\$789 60	16,352	538
Warren, - -	789 61	16,400	344
Morris, - -	1176 02	21,368	454
Essex, - -	1433 27	30,793	266
Bergen, - -	974 94	18,178	451
Hunterdon, -	1700 94	28,604	518
Somerset, - -	991 07	16,506	314
Middlesex, -	1220 01	21,470	374
Monmouth, -	1396 38	25,038	1119
Burlington, -	1615 17	28,822	880
Gloucester, -	1267 20	23,089	1106
Salem, - -	808 72	14,022	333
Cumberland, -	594 82	12,668	502
Cape-May, - -	242 25	4,265	291
	<hr/> 15000 00 <hr/>	<hr/> 277,575 <hr/>	<hr/> 7,490 <hr/>

In 1825 the taxes paid by Sussex and Warren were equal; and on this account, we have assigned to them equal portions of the tax for 1824, though they did not exist as distinct counties until after the taxes for 1824 had been assessed and collected. In 1820, the population of the two counties must have been nearly equal. From the above tables, it appears, that Hunterdon should have been included among the counties, mentioned on page 14 as those, for which territory would be the least desirable rule of distribution.

NOTE 2.

Within a few weeks after the remarks on page 19 were penned; an act was passed by the Legislature, entitled, "An Act to encourage the raising of money for the purposes of Education," the second section of which is as follows:—

And be it enacted, "That hereafter it shall be lawful for the inhabitants in each township of this State, duly qualified to vote at town meetings, to vote, grant, and raise, (in the same manner as other moneys for town purposes are authorized to be raised,) such sum of money as the majority of said meeting shall agree upon; to be laid out and expended under the direction of the town committee, in each township, for the erection and repairing of one or more public school-houses, or for the establishment of free schools and their support, as are or shall be, in the judgment of said committee, necessary."

Under this provision, and at the suggestion of the writer, the inhabitants of West-Windsor township, in April last, voted to raise \$300, and at the same time, they instructed the committee to divide the township into school districts, and to distribute the \$300 among them; on condition, that in each district receiving any portion of this sum, there should be raised, by voluntary contribution, any additional sum, which might be necessary for employing a teacher to instruct, for one year, all the children in such district. As far as we have been able to ascertain, the experiment has been a successful one; and we believe, that the township was never before so well provided with competent teachers.

NOTE 3.

OF THE EDUCATION OF TEACHERS.

The importance of educating young men to become teachers, has been warmly advocated by many friends of common schools; and, in our opinion, cannot easily be overrated. Let any person competent to judge,

make himself acquainted with the condition of our schools, and the qualifications of our teachers ; and he will be satisfied, that the education of teachers is a subject, which deserves, and ought to command the immediate attention of our Legislature. We do not, however, intend to pass a censure upon all the teachers of our common schools ; many of them are competent, assiduous, and deserving of greater patronage than they enjoy. This, however, is far from being the case with them all, and we fear, that it is not so, even with a majority of them. But admitting that they are all competent, still it would be highly desirable, that provision should be made at once, for the support and tuition of fifty or more such youth, as may be willing to devote themselves for several years to the business of teaching : for as soon as the avails of the school fund shall be distributed, there will be a demand for a much larger number of teachers, than can, without some such provision, be obtained.

The only objections, which could be urged against this measure are, the difficulty of inducing young persons to engage in this work ; and the expense of supporting them, while they are attending to a preparatory course of instruction. But, only let our schools be placed upon such a footing, that they will afford suitable remuneration to the teachers, and there will be no difficulty in finding a sufficient number of youth of good talents and unblemished character, willing to enter upon a course of study, that will fit them to take charge of our schools. This matter has been, we think, fairly tested in our own State, by the gentlemen who have been entrusted with the disposal of a large fund, recently raised, by voluntary contribution, for the support of schools &c., in the destitute parts of the State. Thus far, at least, it has been found on trial, that more young men can be had for the purpose above mentioned, than can be supported. The committee charged with this concern, have constantly under their care from ten to fifteen youth, who are preparing to become teachers, and who are supported in part, or in whole, by the committee.

The objection arising from the expense, could in our view, be obviated, by the establishment of a school, in which manual labour should be united with mental culture. Let a farm of suitable size and good quality, be procured ; and the requisite buildings be erected for the accommodation of the teachers, their families, and the scholars. Let work-shops also be erected, in which the various mechanical arts may be taught ; and let every pupil be required to spend, on an average, three hours of every day, (Sabbaths excepted,) in labouring upon the farm, or at some mechanical employment. By an arrangement of this kind, the youth would be able to defray at least, the expense of their board ; while the time spent in manual labour would not be more than they ought to spend in exercise for the benefit of their health. This kind of exercise, moreover, is much better than any system of gymnastics now in vogue ; for it possesses the advan-

tage over gymnastic exercises, that while it tends equally with them to preserve the health of youth, it, at the same time, turns their labour to a profitable account : and for ourselves, we very much doubt the expediency of youth laboriously doing that, which is attended with no other perceptible advantage, than the merely incidental one of preserving their health, which can be, to say the least, as well taken care of, by other and more profitable means. And no plan for the education of youth, is in our view, so deserving of patronage, as that, which, while it makes provision for the improvement of both their intellectual and bodily powers ; teaches them in all they do, to aim at something useful, and this we think is precisely the case with the plan suggested.

For twelve or fifteen thousand dollars, and very probably for a less sum, a farm suitable for such an institution, together with all the requisite buildings, might be obtained in some place not far distant from a good market ; where all the produce of the farm and garden, and all articles manufactured by the scholars, and not wanted for the school, might be disposed of to advantage ; and in return, there might be procured many articles essential to the comfort of those connected with the school ; and by this method, all the expenses of boarding for the teachers and pupils could be defrayed. Estimate the first expense at \$15,000, the interest of this sum at six per cent will be \$900 ;—allow for the salaries of the teachers and incidental expenses \$1100 per annum ; these will make an annual expenditure of \$2000. Suppose then, that we have in the whole State only 400 teachers, and a less number we ought not, and if we have an efficient school system, we cannot have. Again, it is highly probable, that while some will devote themselves for life to the business of teaching ; at least one fifth of those engaged in this business for any one year, will, on an average, relinquish it for something else. If so, we shall require 80 new teachers every year ; and if we wish good ones, we must educate them ; and if we educate them, we must have at all times in the school at least 80 pupils. If they pay nothing towards their own support, the expense for each one will be \$25 per annum, and could the Legislature expend the same sum of money, with a stricter regard to economy, or with greater profit to the State ?

The expense would not be much increased, if there should be a hundred pupils in the school. And, even if a fourth part of them should not be wanted for teachers : still it would be of unspeakable benefit to the State, to have such an institution, as it would afford to many indigent youth, of worth and talent, an opportunity to acquire the rudiments of a good education ; who, otherwise must remain in ignorance, and who, with the aid thus furnished, might possibly become ornaments of their State.

In this school, should be taught, reading, writing, English grammar, Geography. Arithmetic, Algebra, Elements of Geometry, Surveying, &c. Not, that all should be required to attend to every subject here mentioned, but that they should have an opportunity to do so. If it should be deemed

expedient, the course of study could be easily extended, so as to prepare youth for our Colleges.

This plan is not a matter of mere theory : in the State of New-York, it has been tried with success. See report of the Oneida Agricultural School.

NOTE 4.

For information in regard to the origin of the school fund, we would refer the reader to the revised laws of New-Jersey, and for the information relative to the condition of the schools, we would refer him to a report recently made on this subject, by a committee appointed at a meeting, held in Trenton, Nov. 1828, and consisting of his Hon. Chief Justice Ewing, John N. Simpson Esq. and the Hon. Theodore Frelinghuysen. To this report are appended copies of letters, addressed to the Rev. Robert Baird of Princeton, by distinguished individuals residing in the New-England States, and in the States of New-York and Pennsylvania, giving succinct views of the different school systems in those states.

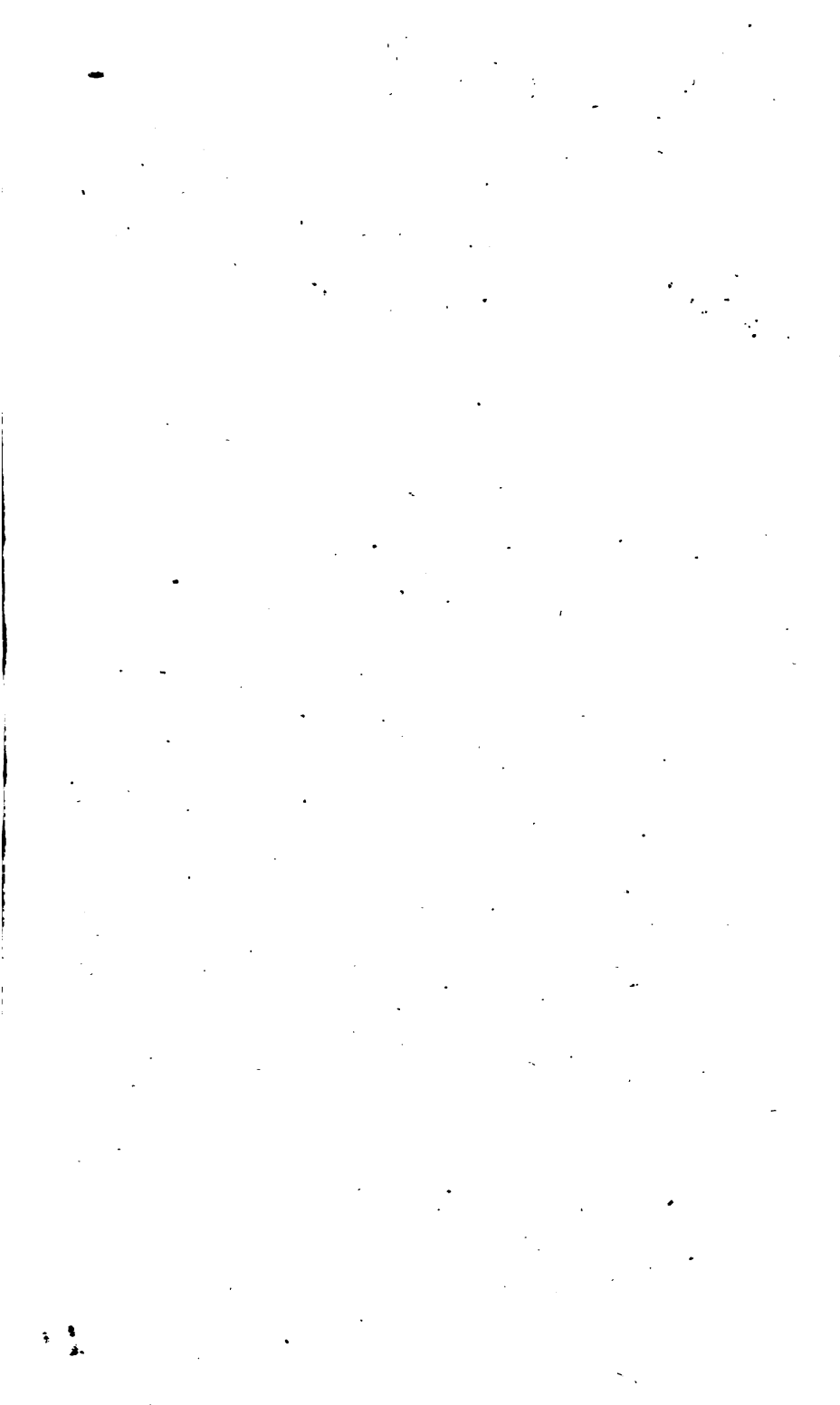
We cannot conclude this note without expressing our conviction, that the citizens of New-Jersey are more indebted to Mr. Baird for the present lively interest, felt by all classes of the community, in the subject of common schools, than to any other person. He has made himself thoroughly acquainted with the wants of the State ; he has visited every county, and by his writings and personal efforts, has roused public attention, to the necessity of our having, at once, an efficient school system.

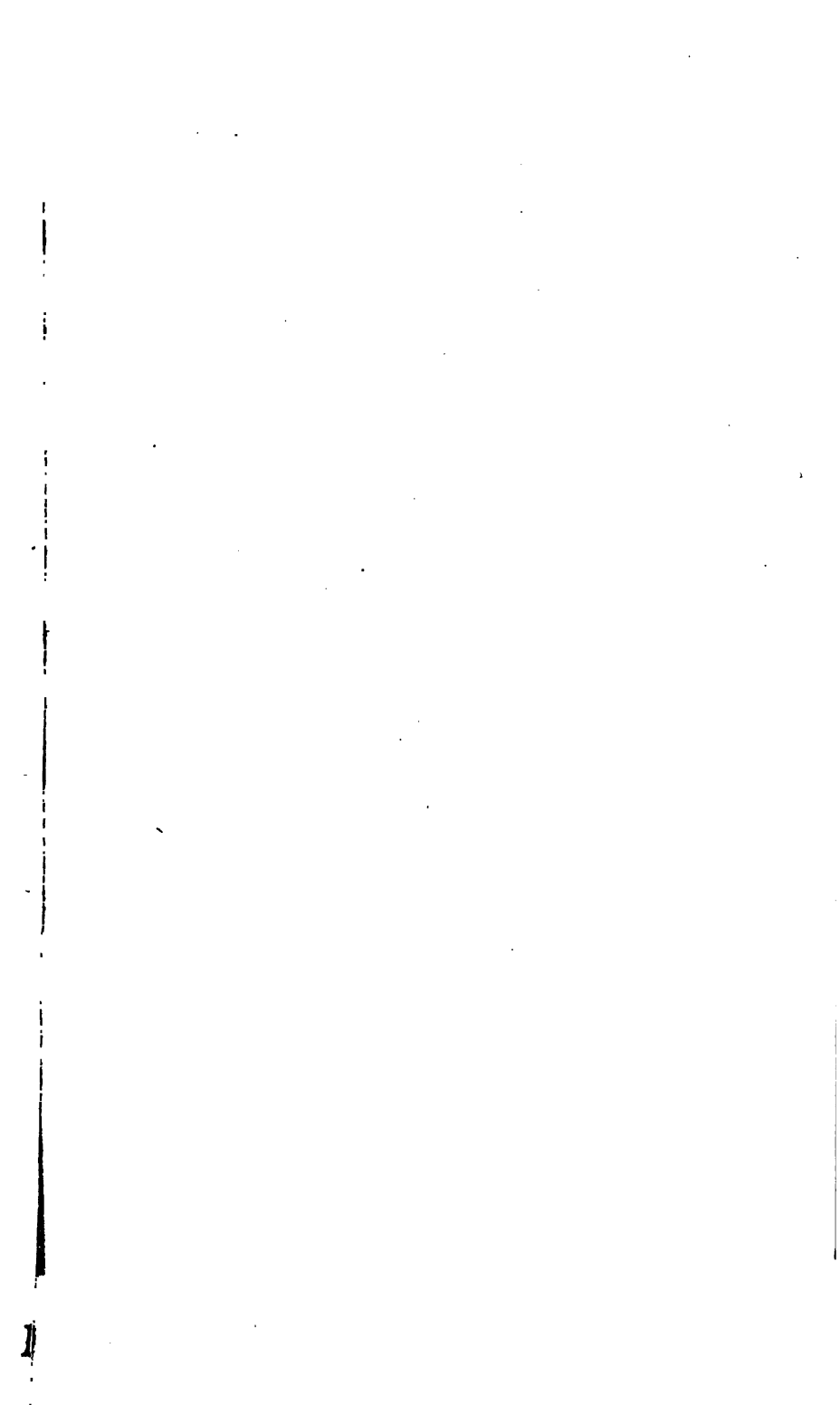
ERRATA.

On page 4, line 18, for *finished* read *furnished*.

On page 6, line 11, omit the word *important*.

On page 7, line 24, omit the words *of course*.







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